

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-34. (Canceled)

Claim 35. (Currently amended) A process for the preparation of lactic acid, comprising:

growing, in a fermentation medium containing a carbon source, a yeast strain both (i) transformed with at least one copy of a gene coding for lactate dehydrogenase functionally linked to a promoter sequence allowing the expression of the gene in the yeast strain and (ii) having reduced pyruvate decarboxylase activity, reduced pyruvate dehydrogenase activity, or both relative to a wild-type yeast of the same strain, wherein the yeast strain produces lactic acid at a yield from 0.5 gram lactic acid per gram glucose to 1 gram lactic acid per gram glucose, and wherein the transformed yeast strain lacks ethanol production ability or has a reduced ethanol production ability with respect to a wild-type yeast of the same strain which has been similarly transformed with the gene encoding lactate dehydrogenase, to produce lactic acid at a yield from 0.5 gram lactic acid per gram glucose carbon source to 1 gram lactic acid per gram glucose carbon source, wherein the yeast strain can grow or maintain its population at the pH of the fermentation medium; and,

recovering the lactic acid from the fermentation medium.

Claim 36. (Previously presented) The process of claim 35, wherein the carbon source is selected from glucose, fructose, galactose, lactose, sucrose, raffinose, maltose, cellobiose, arabinose, or xylose.

Claim 37. (Previously presented) The process of claim 35, wherein the fermentation medium contains less than 5 mM of Mg^{++} , less than 0.02 mM of Zn^{++} , or both.

Claim 38. (Currently amended) The process of claim 35, wherein the fermentation medium has a an initial pH of less than 7 ~~or less~~.

Claim 39. (Currently amended) The process of claim 38, wherein the final pH is 4.5 or less.

Claim 40. (Currently amended) The process of claim 39, wherein the final pH is 3 or less.

Claim 41. (Currently amended) The process of claim 35, wherein the lactic acid is ~~D-lactic acid or~~ L-lactic acid.

Claim 42. (Previously presented) The process of claim 35, wherein recovering comprises extracting lactic acid into an immiscible solvent phase.

Claim 43. (Previously presented) The process of claim 35, wherein recovering comprises distillation of lactic acid or an ester thereof.